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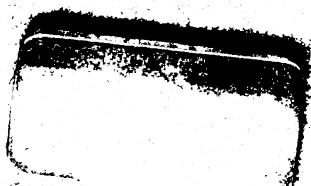
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Sketch of the Catholic Church in the city of Natchez, Miss

Cathedral of Our
Lady of Sorrows
(Natchez, Miss.)

169 E

240



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SKETCH

—OF THE—

CATHOLIC CHURCH

—IN THE—

CITY OF NATCHEZ, MISS.,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONSECRATION OF ITS CATHEDRAL,

SEPTEMBER 19. 1886.



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INTRODUCTION.

The few leaves hurriedly thrown together, can lay little claim to originality of thought or depth of research. Indeed, other and abler hands had long gleaned the fields explored. Of the early Indian missions Shea's learned works leave nothing unsaid, Claiborne's "History of Mississippi" eloquently narrates the march of secular events, while "Clarke's Lives of Deceased Bishops" exhausts that interesting subject. These, with the journals and diaries of the Bishops of Natchez, the documents gathered by Bishop Chance, and the archives of the Cathedral, form the basis for our sketch, while occasional recourse was had to Shea's, "History of the Catholic Church in the United States," Bancroft's "History," DeSmet's "Western Missions and Missionaries," Monteith's "History of the Mississippi Valley," "Kip's "Jesuit Missions," and the biographies of the prominent actors mentioned.

Spread over many pages and volumes, it fell to our lot to harmonize and arrange the scattered material. Or rather, like the lapidary, ours was the loving task to choose "the oriental pearls at random strung," and fashion them into a diadem to crown the venerable Church of Natchez.

The consecration of St. Mary's Cathedral is an auspicious occasion and fitting time to spread out the pages of her sacred tradition. The aged may behold how the Church has waxed strong and fruitful, and the young will cleave yet closer to her and pride themselves in her glory.

Of old it was said: "The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians." More than two hundred years ago heroic men planted here the germ of faith and watered it with their blood.

O! ye glorious martyrs, whose crimson life-blood deeply stained the soil of Mississippi, intercede for this part of your Master's vineyard, and by your prayers may the tree, planted by you and watered by your successors, become more fertile, and may its fruit ripen unto eternal glory.

Heartman's Auctions
Oct 2

The Early History of Catholicity in Natchez, Miss.

In the early spring of 1682 the chivalric LaSalle floated down the lordly stream Marquette loved to call the "River of the Immaculate Conception." Where the proud Natchez reared his wigwam, he tarried. In a temple with no dome save the azure vault of heaven, a rustic altar is erected, and the Recollect Father Zenobius Membre, for the first time in these untrodden regions (1) renews Calvary's atoning sacrifice, and bounteous graces are thus treasured up for the future Church of Natchez. Imagination pictures the scene. Grouped around the gentle priest kneel the lordly LaSalle, his hardy Lieutenant, Tonti, the "Iron Handed," his twenty followers in all the pride and panoply of war; in the background, from amidst the clustering oaks, gaze the untamed children of the forest. (2)

LaSalle passed on, and the Mexic Gulf, with its ever restless billows, "voiceless, limitless and lonely," opened on his sight. On their way northward they again tarried among the Natchez, but a rumor of treachery hurried them away. Time speeds on; the proud warrior treads his native bluffs free and untrammelled, and the memory of the gallant LaSalle vanishes in the deep mist of years.

The year 1698 witnessed the arrival of two meek men in a frail birchen canoe, to the red men the pipe of peace they offer, and of "Him that made them more beautiful and mightier than the Sun," they preach. They were Canadian priests from the seminary of Quebec, Rev. Francis J. de Montigny and Antoine Davion. Meeting no

(1) It is a mooted question whether De Soto ever visited the site of this city. Certain it is, that he had communication with the Natchez Indians; and that on May 21, 1542, he met his untimely end in this immediate locality.

(2) On Easter Sunday, March 22, 1682, after having celebrated the divine mysteries for the French and fulfilled the duties of good Christians we left the village of the Natchez."—From the French of Father Membre's 'Relations.'

encouragement, and with little hope of converts, after a short stay they proceeded to Biloxi, lately founded by Iberville; they remained but ten days, and with a supply of wine for Mass they returned to their arduous and painful missions. Here they had the joy to welcome a co-laborer in their dangerous field of duty, Father Jno. F. Buisson de St. Come; leaving him to evangelize the Natchez tribe, Father de Montigny passed over to the Teanzas, and Father Davion (1) sought to spread our faith among the Tunicas. Thus, two years before the site of Natchez was selected the Church had permanent missions established for the Indians.

Father St. Come became a general favorite. In his honor the royal heir was named. Outward respect these rude warriors would pay to a noble man, but to forsake the cherished Gods of their fathers, they would not. For eight weary years he pleaded, prayed and suffered, but vain his suffering, vain his tearful prayers. One thing more had he to give, and right willingly was it given. Descending the river in the fall of 1707, he was foully murdered by the Sitimachas, near Donaldsonville. (2)

Some writers make mention of a Father Geoffrey Erborie as laboring among the Natchez till 1709, if so, the record of his life is inscribed on the page of eternity. Thus far, missionaries and explorers from Canada had sought the villages along the Mississippi by the way of the Great Lakes and the Wisconsin River.

France had learned of the vast country washed by the Mexican Gulf, and realizing the rich prize within her grasp, soon planted colonies on our southern coast, so that from this period all intercourse with the mother country was carried on by vessels plying directly between France and her colonies of Louisiana. Glowing accounts of a fertile country where overflows were unknown, and friendly natives dwelt, reached the ears of Iberville, the founder of Biloxi.

The arrival of the veteran Tonti, together with his vivid narrations,

(1) Father Davion erected a cross on the highest bluff in the Tunica country; this site was long known as Roche a Davion, in later times the name was changed to Fort Adams. Under the shadow of the cross he daily said Mass. Their hardness of heart constrained him to leave the natives several times, but by earnest entreaties they as often induced him to return; on one occasion even offering to make him chief.

(2) He was not, however, the first martyr in Mississippi. Father Nicholas Foucault S. J., a missionary among the Yazoos, was treacherously massacred in 1703 by his Koroas guides. To his lot fell the holy privilege of first interceding in Heaven for this benighted region.

induced Iberville and his brother Bienville to accompany him on his return. Up the muddy Mississippi they creep, past sedgy banks where the mosquito (1) and the alligator thrive, past the miasmatic swamps whence New Orleans shall soon arise, past the Tunica Hills, past where the Red River pours in its flood of alluvial waters, they pushed on, and, on Feb. 11th, 1700, catch their first sight of the Bluffs of Natchez. Charmed with the surroundings, Iberville marked off the boundaries for a fort, and laid out plans for a city to be called Rosalie, (2) in honor of the wife (3) of the French Minister of Marine. Here he found Father St. Come—both ambassadors; one of Heaven, the other of earth. Standing on a lofty eminence, a teeming country spread out before him, at his feet a mighty highway of commerce, Iberville's fancy creates about him a vast city, the future metropolis of New France, the base for distant explorations, the spiritual center of missions among the aborigines.

The Natchez Indians were the most powerful, probably the most civilized tribe of the lower Mississippi Valley; they were, however, cruel and despotic; the Sun was their divinity, and fire, his representative, was kept burning with fanatic zeal. Human victims were immolated, and, to appease their offended deity, inhuman mothers even sacrificed their tender offspring. The great chief, or "Sun," of this singular tribe, attended by some six hundred braves, received Iberville with all the pomp of royalty, and a treaty of amity was concluded.

In 1703 whites are again to be found at Rosalie, and henceforth we may expect a continual coming and going of white traders or hunters. Here and there a plantation on St. Catherine's grant, is laid out, stray settlers and laborers arrive, and the hum of civilization is heard on the hills of Natchez. Father St. Come is here, biding his time between the conversion of the Indians and his ministrations to the settlers. From the control of the French government Louisiana passed into the hands of a monopoly of merchants (4) headed by Antoine Crozat; they appointed Mr. de la Loire des Ursins as their agent at

(1) Then, as now, these festive singers were the day torment and night pest of all voyagers on the Father of Waters. In Father Du Poisson's *Memoirs* we read: "The myriads of 'mosketors' give us no rest day or night. I think they are a continuation of the plagues of Egypt—to try the patience of Christians."

(2) Rosalie aux Natchez.

(3) Comtesse de Ponchartrain.

(4) Probably in 1710.

the trading post established on the St. Catherine in 1715, and induced by their grants and bounties many emigrants soon flocked hither.

Intercourse with the whites, as history ever teaches, developed the worst traits in the character of the savage. Indian treachery and cruelty, or the cupidity of the settlers, led to frequent and bloody encounters. The murder and robbery of a belated or lone traveler was a common occurrence; there was no security of person or property.

Brave Iberville was dead. (1) Bienville having been superseded as Governor, received a commission to chastise the Indians, and for the protection of the colonists to erect a strong fort at Natchez. With fifty men he left Biloxi, and, meeting the Indians, demanded satisfaction for the recent outrages. This, after some delay, was accorded, and Bienville quietly proceeded to Natchez. Aided by the "Great Sun" and his people, he built Fort Rosalie, some 670 yards (2) back from the river. It was of pentagonal form, built of durable wood, and it enclosed a store, magazine and barracks. From this period, 1716, dates the existence of the city of Natchez, obviously two years before a pile of the Crescent City had been driven. Leaving a garrison of eighteen men, Bienville returned to his former home at Biloxi.

In 1718 sixty settlers were on their way to Rosalie, followed shortly after by some two hundred and fifty pioneers for the same destination. Our post was fast becoming a busy inland mart. Unhappily their spiritual progress did not keep pace with their material growth owing to the absence of any resident pastor; Father St. Come had winged his flight heavenwards thirteen years before. True, there is mention of a certain Father Juif, as exercising his ministry here for a while, but nevertheless it is certain that the settlers had no spiritual aid but such as they might receive from chance visits of passing priests. Father Charlevoix (3) visited Natchez in 1721. Finding no priest he remained awhile; he preached, exhorted, entreated, yet few availed themselves of this season of grace. Neglect was fast corroding their faith. On his return to Europe, Father Charlevoix's touching recital of

(1) He died, July 9, 1706, at St. Domingo, of that fated southern scourge, yellow fever. His were not the first bright hopes suddenly blasted by this fell destroyer. It had decimated the settlement in 1701.

(2) This must not be confounded with subsequent Fort Rosalie whose location is now pointed out near the incline.

(3) This is the famous Jesuit historian of New France. For the sake of accuracy he personally visited all regions mentioned in his "Histoire de la Nouvelle France."

their brethren's spiritual destitution in the western wilds excited universal sympathy throughout France. Missionaries were called for and it is the glory of the Catholic Church that, in every age, her sons are ready for the call of duty. Loyola's chosen sons sought the post of danger amidst fierce tribes, whilst to the meek and devoted Capuchins was confided the care of the military posts. Under such auspices religion could but flourish; all things betokened peace and prosperity. The Indians were apparently contented, and as yet no indication of the deluge of blood soon to overwhelm the devoted post was discernible.

1722 found the fort a mass of rotten timber; a handful of soldiers under Mr. Barnaval in garrison and the settlers, spread over their outlying farms, quietly pursuing the arts of peace. The fire of race animosity was but slumbering; every petty quarrel intensified the glowing embers—but fuel was needed to enkindle a vast conflagration. And this was at hand. A French soldier kills a brave; the Indians retaliate. Ambushes, assassinations, attacks on detached farms follow in quick succession, spreading death and dire dismay throughout the length and breadth of the colony. Stern and prompt retribution was sworn by Bienville. Attacked but defeated the Natchez now falsely sued for peace. Smooth waters run deep. For the utter extermination of the hated pale-faced a dark conspiracy based upon an equal distribution of plunder was silently and secretly hatched between the Chickasaws and the Natchez.

This brings us to the year of grace 1729. Spring passed on, Summer followed, then bleak November's winds swept over the devoted city. The resident pastor, the Capuchin Father Philibert was in New Orleans. Saturday evening Father Du Poisson, arrived here and at the earnest prayer of the people delayed his departure for a day. The next day was the first Sunday of Advent and its prophetic Gospel (1) furnished the text for his sermon. Terrible and providential was the warning. Was it heeded? Father Du Poisson (2) had arranged to leave in the afternoon, but the loss of his devoted companion, Brother Crucy, from sunstroke, and a sick call which might not be neglected, delayed his departure till the following day.

(1) On the signs preceding the Day of Judgment.

(2) This saintly priest was genial and full of humor which is reflected in his interesting "Memoirs." His station was among the Arkansas.

Tuesday the 29th—the day of fiendish vengeance—had sunk deep into the minds of the conspirators, but the Natchez, too selfish to divide the spoils or to blood-thirsty to share their gory work, anticipated. (1)

Monday the 28th the sun rose bright and beautiful. From sweet refreshing slumber his rosy penetrating beams roused many a one that ere another dawn would sleep a sleep that knew no waking save on eternity's boundless shores. Under pretence of seeking ammunition for a grand hunt the treacherous Indians introduced themselves into each farmhouse, fort, and store. At 9 o'clock, the signal given, the work of death began to know no intermission for three long mortal hours.

Reverently bearing in his priestly hands the Blessed Sacrament, Father Du Poisson sought to comfort and fortify a departing Christian soul. A huge warrior sprang at him, his companion, M. de Corderi, interposed and received the blow of the death-dealing tomahawk. Again attacked Father Du Poisson's (2) head was cleft intwain and with Jesus "the hope of the dying," on his breast, and Jesus, "strength of Martyrs," in his heart, Father Du Poisson's pure soul journeyed to meet that same Jesus, "the exceeding great reward of them that die in Him."

The carnage went on, no male was spared and when the noonday sun looked down his rays in pity turned aside. Of the 700 settlers 250 lay dead—dead with no gentle hand to bless and soothe them, dead with all the attending horror of Indian warfare, dead in stores, dead at work, dead on the highways. Surrounded by drunken savage-fiends—husbandless wives and fatherless children were huddled together. Death a torture and life but one long sorrow—what agony was crowded into these few hours. When the western sun sank to rest, charitable night let down her curtains of darkness. But only for a few fleeting moments. Again the fretful flames of burning fort and smouldering farmhouse revealed strewn about as they fell the unburied corpses of the ghastly dead. (3)

(1) Some writers allege other reasons. Say they, an equal number of arrows was placed within the sacred precincts of both tribes, and on every rising of the sun from his eastern couch one arrow was to be broken. A lovely romance here relieved the stormy scenes. An Indian maid had become enamored of a young Frenchman; bent on rescuing her lover she revealed to him the plot. His story was ridiculed and himself thrown in prison. In her despair she resolved to abstract one of the sacred arrows, vainly hoping that the French might overpower the unaided Natchez.

(2) As is well known the three arrows quartered in the coat of arms of the present Bishop of Natchez commemorate the early martyrs of Mississippi.

(3) Out of the entire number but two men were spared—both for their skill—M. Pericault the ship-carpenter and a tailor. Two soldiers hunting in the woods escaped to bear the sad tidings to the sea coast.

A thrill of horror ran through the colony and immediate steps for reprisal were taken by Perier, the Commandant at Biloxi. An army was at once sent to the scene of devastation. Surprised by a detachment, the Natchez were defeated and a number of French prisoners, gaunt and terror-stricken from ill use, were recaptured. The Indians now fortified themselves in their stronghold, compelling the avengers to open a regular siege. Negotiations secured the return of the remaining captives, and the Natchez undefeated apparently without reason fled across the river.

The helpless children were taken to New Orleans where the Ursuline Nuns, then recently established, opened to the poor orphans their hearts and their homes; their tender care replaced in part a mother's loving tenderness.

Reinforced by 650 men Perier hunted down the remnants of the Natchez. He met them on Sicily Island, La., near the Washita. Beaten and disheartened a part surrendered; the others scattered over the adjacent morasses, or were adopted into neighboring tribes. Thus as a nation they disappeared from history.

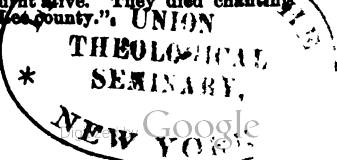
Brave to rashness, cruel to excess, wedded to their idolatry even to fanatascism, the Church made no headway among them. Her missionaries lived, suffered and died in their midst, but from their impious rites they would not be weaned. Around them some writers (1) have thrown the glamour of romance. In song and story they will live and as says Mississippi's eloquent historian, "their peculiar name will be perpetuated by the historic city that sits in sadness and beauty on the site of their ancient capital." (2) To the Chickasaws, prime instigators and abettors of the Natchez, like punishment was meted out. (3)

And now let us sadly retrace our steps to Natchez. Its people

(1) Particularly Chateaubriand in his "Natchez"—a souvenir of his American voyages. Published in 1826—2 tomes, 8vo.

(2) Instigated and kept intoxicated by the Natchez, who supplied them with whiskey, the Yazoes rose two weeks later, massacred their missionary, Father Souel, and plundered his cabin, however not before killing his negro servant—a faithful Christian and an exemplary man. Unaware of this, Father Doutrelean stopped at the mouth of the Yazoo to say Mass. At the Angels' Hymn of Peace himself and his companion were attacked. A charge of shot flattened against his teeth; he sank upon his knees to await death. Remaining unnoticed he gained his canoe, and amid a shower of bullets, though wounded, outstripped his pursuers.

(3) During this campaign Father Senat (Senac) and a party of Frenchmen fell into the hands of the Chickasaws. "The generous Senat might have fled, but, regardless of danger, mindful only of duty, he stayed on the battle-field to receive the last sigh of the wounded." All save one were tied to stakes and burnt alive. They died chanting the Miserere, and "their ashes mingle with the soil of Lee county."



dead or scattered the stranger finds where once nestled a thriving village but charred ruins, a dismantled fort and bleached bones. Again the wild deer ranges over its hills, the owl seeks a home amidst its ruins and the Choctaws (Chactas) roam through its forests in search of game.

(1) The French garrison had been withdrawn and thus forsaken it remained till 1745 when Gov. Vaudrieul placed there a force of eight soldiers and fifteen negroes. Meanwhile France, embarrassed at home and straightened abroad, found it impolitic to retain her grasp on her transatlantic colonies. From her crown she plucked Louisiana, her richest jewel; explored by her sons, inhabited by her children and enriched with their blood it was cast off to be regained for a time and then lost forever. Fearing lest it should pass into the hands of her hated rival, England, France by a secret treaty ceded the province to Spain, immediate possession was not however taken. The next year, 1763, all Louisiana, north of a line running through the middle of Bayou Manchac, Amite River, Lake Maurepas, and Lake Ponchartrain, was by the treaty of Paris transferred to Great Britain and by her immediately erected into the province of West Florida. (2)

In 1764 all the British forts were garrisoned and Ft. Rosalie, now styled Ft. Panmure, once more became a military port. Emigration from the Atlantic and New England States had begun to flow into the fertile and peaceful country about Natchez. It would be singular indeed to find any development of the Catholic Church under British rule when at home the policy of repression and tyranny was in full force. From 1763 to 1783 no mention of priest or church can be found. The emigrants were not Catholics and the few of the True Faith who remained from the olden times gradually intermarried with the stranger.

(1) Immediately after the massacre the French threw up a strong breastwork near the river side. This, too, was known as Fort Rosalie: it underwent many improvements and alterations from its successive occupants. With the great landslide it disappeared, its former position is still pointed out.

(2) At first the northern boundary of West Florida was the thirty-first degree of north latitude (present southern boundary of our State), hence all of Mississippi, including Natchez, was not comprised in the above cession and for a time had no established government. Later the State of Georgia claimed their territory as part of her grant from the seaboard to the Mississippi. Great Britain subsequently declared the Yazoo River to be the northern boundary of West Florida. When the War of Independence made a redistribution of territory necessary, West Florida was acquired by Spain whilst a very great part of the British possessions was ceded to the United States. But what were the limits of West Florida? The United States held to the parallel of thirty-one deg. and claimed all the territory to the north of that line; Spain held that the Yazoo was the correct boundary and claimed Natchez and adjacent territory as under her dominion. Hence we have three claimants, the United States, Spain and the State of Georgia.

Without priest or sacrament it is not strange that a generation later their descendants knew not the religion of their fathers.

Natchez has seen many vicissitudes of rule and reign. The year 1779 witnessed the Red Cross of St. George descend from Ft. Panmure, replaced amid salvos of artillery, by the royal standard of Spain. Conquered by the dashing young Galvez, Grandpre was left in command, and shortly after became the first Governor under the Spanish regime.

Centuries before Spain's gentlest monarch had gained for her successors the title of "The Catholic," and if not at home at least in their colonies they have richly deserved this noble cognomen. With them the spread of our Holy Faith was of paramount importance, and in this, sound policy not less than religious zeal might have directed their course. People dislike to settle where no provision is made for their eternal welfare. Hence we are not surprised to find that one of the Spanish King's first official acts was the establishment of a Church. Public documents yet extant attest that April 11th, 1788, a parcel of land for Church purposes was purchased by the Spanish government from Stephen Minor, Richard Carpenter acting as agent. It lay in the vicinity of the fort, contained 300 arpents (1) and was valued at 16,000 reals (\$2,000). As well as may be determined at this late date, this tract was bounded by what is now included between Franklin, Rankin, State and Wall streets. A frame house 40 by 50 feet, galleries included, containing five rooms, with a spacious hall, was upon the premises, and was intended for a parochial residence. Tradition points out the Court House square as its site. This was probably the only house then on the hill. Orders were issued for the erection of a suitable Church, and the Bishop of Salamanca (2) was instructed to choose four Irish priests of recognized zeal and cultivation, for the distant Natchez mission. Each was to receive from the King 3,000 yellow reals (\$375) for his outfit—all expenses of transportation to be defrayed from the royal treasury—and a remuneration of \$40 per month during their residence in the province. To prove that this agreement was faithfully executed till 1791, and presumably later, official vouchers still exist. Three of these priests, Rev. Wm. Savage, Rev. Gregory White and Rev. Constantine McKenna, the first named of whom was

(1) An arpent is about three-fifths of an acre.

(2) A diocese in Spain; it possessed a missionary college to prepare priests for Ireland where Catholic education was then proscribed.

appointed Superior of the Mission, soon embarked from Cadiz, and were in Natchez before 1790. Of the Rev. Michael Lamport, our documents give no precise information; it is questionable if he ever set out for his mission. The Church, dedicated to the Holy Family, was a two-story frame building, and stood on Commerce street, over the spot now familiarly known as the "Centre of Natchez."

Once more might Catholics be secure of the consolation of religion; again were they edified by the grand and imposing ceremonies of the Church.

In 1796, warrants for improvements in the priests' house, and for repairs of some fences, were issued, and we thence infer that at least till the above time the clergy were in official possession. (1)

It will be remembered that the United States laid claim to the territory of Mississippi, and now, her internal disturbances quieted, and foreign complications settled, our government showed a disposition to enforce her claim. Meanwhile diplomatic overtures and negotiations were carried on, and Spain, either unable to retain possession, or convinced of the justness of American claims, withdrew her garrison by night, March 29, 1798, and the next rising sun saluted the Stars and Stripes as they floated to the breeze.

Of the Spanish domination the people retained a fond remembrance; the stately governors had endeared themselves by their lenient and paternal rule, and many settlers followed them on their departure. During all this time the Catholic religion was established by law, yet we read of no attempt to proselyte or proscribe others of different religious tenets. (2) Simultaneous with the recall of the Spanish officials the Catholics of Natchez witnessed the departure of their beloved clergy, and again their oft-tried flock was without a shepherd.

The courteous reader will readily pardon a digression from strict chronological order and follow us through the different phases our Church property underwent on the change of Masters.

(1) In some old memoirs we find it stated that Fathers Malone and Brady exercised the ministry in Natchez at this period but this is probably an error. It is also said that as in European countries the church had the privilege of sanctuary. It was no uncommon sight to see a gay Spanish reveller at the church door, his fingers in the key-hole, to avoid arrest for some mid-night misdemeanor.

(2) One that carefully studied these time says: "There was in fact more toleration and freedom for Protestantism in the Natchez district, than for Catholics and dissenters from the ruling denomination either in Old or New England."—Claiborne, History of Mississippi.

When Mississippi fell under the jurisdiction of the United States the Church property (300 arpents) was seized by the Federal Government under the pretense that the land was, in reality, a possession of the Spanish Crown, and that the Church not being an incorporated body, was incapable of holding real estate. It is true the Spanish government held titles to the property—none others could be found among the archives—but it was in trust for the Catholic Church, which, recognized as the religion of the realm, was by the fact legally incorporated according to Spanish statutes. However, the American government was in actual possession, and by act of Congress proceeded by grants to parcel out the tract to divers parties. The United States government did indeed institute a Commission to pass on individual claims, and not till November, 1804, were claims debarred, but as the Church was not a corporate body and had no official head in Natchez, no claim was presented in her behalf and thus passed away property of which she, in equity, had the right of constructive possession.

Some hold that this was an affair between the two governments subject to diplomatic adjustment, and did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Commission appointed to adjudicate individual claims. The early records of the Church show the continued litigation to which the remaining property gave rise. (1) The trustees were sued by the heirs of Barland's estate, but unsuccessfully. At another time action was brought by William Rutherford, but this suit was compromised.

Shortly after Bishop Chance took possession of his See he visited Havana, and in the colonial archives there discovered the documents of the original grant of 300 arpents. In the Diocesan records is still found a copy of the Memorial Bishop Chance on his return addressed to Congress praying for the reversion of the property, or for an equitable compensation. But whether this memorial was ever presented we have no means of determining.

During the administration of Bishop Van de Velde suit was instituted to recover the graveyard now surrounding the Cathedral. Twice his suit was gained in the lower courts and possession given by the Sheriff to the Bishop.

Listen, refined reader, to Bishop Van de Velde's own words ;

(1) Old Catholic graveyard and lot on Commerce Street.

"Said graveyard was in a deplorable condition; the fences needed being repaired it having become a thoroughfare for persons who wished to take a shorter way from Union to Rankin street, and vice versa, two beaten paths crossed the graveyard. It was a kind of common playground for children and boys who often took pleasure in defacing and mutilating the tombs and tombstones and rolling them about—the surface of the graveyard was strewn with human bones, and horses, cows, dogs and pigs wandered through them at random. As soon as Bishop Van de Velde was put in possession of it he put up a high fence on Union street, to prevent it being any longer used as a thoroughfare, and repaired the fences on Rankin and Main streets so as effectually to keep out hogs, pigs and dogs. He gathered all the bones that were scattered on the surface of the ground, and that filled nearly two boxes, and had them deposited in the crypt, under the sanctuary of the Church. He erected a fence to inclose the upper part of the graveyard and had a large grave dug within the enclosure, in which all the human bones picked up on the surface, and several skeletons of unknown persons, were deposited, and to which all the tombstones were transferred. He filled up all the holes and gullies in the graveyard and planted trees and shrubs in the inclosed part. He felt indignant at the wanton profanation and desecration which constantly took place whilst the contested part of the graveyard was in litigation and claimed by the city, and he spent over \$200 of his own money for the purpose of preventing the desecration of the remains of the dead. All the city has ever done under its claim to the same graveyard was to build, but never to repair, a low fence around it, and to level the ground to obtain earth for some of our principal streets, where human bones and skulls, were mixed with the earth thus used, and thrown about the streets, as many of the present inhabitants who have witnessed the horrid profanation can testify." (1)

Meanwhile the Supreme Court of the State reversed the decision of the lower court, and after six months' possession an injunction was issued against Bishop Van de Velde, the property was lost, and no compensation ever rendered for the expense incurred.

We now turn back to the opening of this century, to take up the

(1) From Notes of Bishop Van de Velde to his legal adviser.

broken thread of our narrative—meagre it will be in part, disjointed in places, yet it is all that can be gathered from Church registers, documents and personal reminiscences.

Natchez, originally under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Bishop of Havana, in 1793, became part of the newly established See of New Orleans, but on the change of temporal rulers the charge fell to the care of the venerable Archbishop Carroll, of Baltimore, then Ordinary of the vast region east of the Mississippi. The zealous prelate made efforts to save the property, but to no avail. He was kindly relieved of solicitude for the spiritual welfare of our people by Bishop Penalvert, of New Orleans, who promised to send priests from time to time. (1)

Rev. F. Lennon first came, and was followed in 1802 by Father Boudin, (2) who remained until 1803. Both labored zealously to keep alive the fire of faith. A German priest from Pennsylvania next visited Natchez, the want of a chalice and vestment debarred him from saying Mass, but he made his visit fruitful by baptizing a number of children.

In 1810 we find mention of another priest, name unknown, as being in the city. Thence to 1817 is a blank. At this latter date a generous Spaniard, Manuel de Texada, bequeathed \$1,500 to the Church, provided the then dilapidated buildings were repaired and a resident priest obtained within two years.

To enjoy this bequest it was necessary to secure a legal existence, and accordingly this year the articles of incorporation, under the title of Catholic Church Society, are found spread in the Register. Years before, as early as 1807, the Catholics had become an incorporate body but some informality rendered it illegal, hence this later incorporation.

This legacy, it will be borne in mind, was contingent, depending on the repairs of the chapel and the procuring of a pastor. To fulfill these conditions a pious gentleman, Daniel McGraw, advanced the necessary funds, and a priest was obtained from Kentucky. He came from

(1) The annexed quotation will throw some light on the number of Catholics here at this date and the general temper of the people. "Natchez has become a most abominable place. I suggest the use of the military. I have serious thoughts of seizing the Catholic Church building and converting it into a court house, but fear to hurt the feelings of about a dozen Catholic families and give offence to the King of Spain who built it."—Letter of Winthrop Sargent, first United States Governor of Mississippi, quoted in Claiborne's History. It is but just to add that this gentleman had very Puritanical ideas. Diversions and amusements on Sundays, he regarded as heinous violations of morality. When the Spanish governor left one individual man in prison, his successor would have incarcerated the entire population. Happily his stay was short.

(2) Father Boudin was afterwards drowned in Bayou Lafourche while on a sick call.

the Diocese of Bardstown, Ky., and arrived in 1819, but proceeded to New Orleans to procure requisites for Mass. In June of that year the adorable sacrifice was again offered after a long interruption. It is related that this reverend gentleman preached a long sermon, but his indifferent pronunciation was a matter of remark—probably merriment to his hearers. This coming to his knowledge, he informed them that if his English was broken he could speak *good* French, whereupon he began to give them a severe and animated rating in French. Undoubtedly this made a decided impression, for till recently many an old inhabitant could yet rehearse its salient points.

Father Blanc, afterwards Archbishop of New Orleans, spent some four months here during 1820. He preached frequently during Lent, and stirred up the careless, and before his departure he installed the Rev. Mr. Maenhaut as pastor. This devoted priest remained till 1824, when he was sent to heal the deplorable schism among the trustees of St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans. Prior to Father Maenhaut Father Chandaret made a short stay here.

In 1824 Bishop Dubourg gave a mission here, and at its close administered Confirmation—probably the first episcopal function performed here. He was assisted by the pastor and Rev. M. Vidal. The latter clergyman was brother to Don Jose Vidal, Spanish Governor, from whom Vidalia took its name. This holy priest led an almost eremitical life, poor for Christ's sake, he gave his patrimony to the needy. The congregation of Natchez frequently profited of his ministry on his occasional visits to say Mass.

The Rev. Mr. Gallagher, in 1825, is numbered among the pastors; he died here during the same year. His choice and well selected library was sold, and his vestments and altar service passed into the hands of speculators who ripped up the vestments for the sake of the silk they contained—a sad commentary on the religious spirit or poverty of Catholics.

From 1828 to 1829 the Rev. M. Ganillo officiated as we learn from several of his controversies with the Board of Trustees. The Rev. Mr. Doyle appears in 1831.

Through all these mutations the love and veneration of the congregation had been entwined around the poor old Spanish Chapel on Commerce street, but now, alas! these ties of fond remembrances were

ruthlessly to be severed. It was completely destroyed by fire December 28, 1832. (1) In this conflagration was lost a fine organ said to have belonged to Louis XVI., the beheaded King of France, and presented by Louis XVIII. to Bishop Dubourg, and by the latter to the Catholics of Natchez. So far as we can ascertain no effort was made to rebuild on the old site. Both before and after the burning the advisability of erecting a substantial brick church was discussed, but it seems to have gone no farther than a set of resolutions. "A nondescript little chapel (corner of Main and Union streets), a room 15x20 feet perched like an airie over the one room of the priest's house, and reached by a flight of rickety outside stairs" long served as sanctuary for the few Catholics. It was only at a later date that increased members rendered necessary the lease of Mechanics' Hall (2) for Divine service.

Shortly after the destruction of the church a wealthy German priest, Father Kinderling came; he offered \$400 of his own income to rebuild the church and promised to give his services, as pastor, gratuitously; yet for some unknown reason his proffer was declined. This generous priest is next mentioned in New Orleans where he continued his bountiful charities, occasionally he revisited Natchez to perform marriages and baptisms.

In 1838 Bishop Blanc of New Orleans sent the celebrated Lazarist Father Timon, subsequently Bishop of Buffalo, to give one of his usually successful missions. In the same year Father Van de Velde was sent to make arrangements for the establishment of an episcopal See in Natchez and by an anomaly the successor prepared the way for the predecessor.

• The next year, 1840, left deep and devastating marks on the face of our fair city. The "Great Tornado" swept over a large extent of country and in its track spread terror and desolation; the greater portion of the city was left in ruins. Father Odin, a Lazarist missionary and later the sainted Archbishop of New Orleans, was aboard a steamboat in mid-stream when the terrific tornado rushed by. Struck by the

(1) The building was two-story, the lower of which was used as a store. The leasing of this was apparently one of the most laborious duties of the Board of Trustees—at least they record but little else. It was to this chapel that some irreverent but facetious wag applied the following distich:

"The Spirit above is the spirit Divine,
The spirit below is the spirit of wine."

(2) Situated on Main between Rankin and Union.

gale the boat nearly overturned and Father Odin and his companion, giving themselves up for lost, fell on their knees and it is said the boat immediately righted itself. Father Odin rendered heroic service in rescuing people swept overboard from neighboring boats.

Father Brogard became pastor in 1839 and labored zealously amid many discouragements till the advent of Bishop Chance in 1841. He was especially hampered by the stupid opposition and interference of a self-constituted board of trustees, who, at a certain meeting, denounced and autocratically deposed him from his ministry in Natchez. It is gratifying to record that at a subsequent meeting the irreverent censure was expunged from the minutes and due reparation made to the worthy priest. Father Badin, the proto-priest, ordained in the United States, also paid Natchez passing visits; we regret that no particulars can be obtained of this saintly but original priest's stay in this part of the country.

II.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE BISHOPS OF NATCHEZ.

RT. REV. J. J. CHANCHE.

On the night of May 18th, 1841, a tall, dignified gentleman of priestly bearing, and some 46 years of age, disembarked at Natchez. It was John Joseph Chanche, first Bishop of Natchez.

Well nigh half a century before, a refined and opulent family, refugees from the negro insurrection of San Domingo, had sought a home in hospitable Baltimore, and in that Catholic city John, their first born, saw the light Oct. 4, 1795.

A lovely boy, young Chanche entered St. Mary's Seminary in the first blush of innocence and in his fifteenth year, when life's alluring pleasures first unfold their budding joys, he chose the Lord for his portion and inheritance forever. Of a thoughtful temperament, study was his delight and to his youthful industry, his mind owed the rich treasures of knowledge and erudition which united with innate brilliant humor fitted him to shine in the councils of the learned and charm in the amenities of social life.

Ordained in his twenty-fourth year, he became affiliated with the Sulpitians. In this venerable Society he filled the highest offices with distinction and when the episcopal dignity sought him he was the honored President of St. Mary's College, his own Alma Mater. To tear away from this cherished institution, to go out from among relatives and friends, to quit a loved home was to rend asunder ties that "twice twenty golden years" had woven.

Consecrated March 14, 1841, by Archbishop Eccleston in the stately Cathedral of Baltimore, Bishop Chanche, the oil of consecration yet fresh upon his brow, set out for his distant See. Alone and unher-

alded he trod the soil of his episcopal city; for an escort he found a porter, and his first night was spent in hired lodgings.

His vast diocese was coextensive with the great State of Mississippi then peopled by 400,000 souls, few of whom were of the true fold and fewer still that cared ought for the interests of Jesus or for His Spouse, the Church. Within its border no churches rose and two lone priests (1) ministered to its scattered flocks. But Bishop Chanche faltered not; fortified by the Holy Ghost, whose seven-fold gifts he had but as yesterday received, he might not shrink. With God, his strength, Mary, (2) his refuge, the salvation of souls his end, he would dare and do all.

The day after his arrival, Ascension Thursday, he officiated at Mechanics' Hall, preached and proposed (3) to the congregation his future course. He regulated the tenure of the church property and then departed for the north to seek among his numerous friends means to build his proposed Cathedral, which to serve as a parish church, was the most pressing need. His visit successful, on February 24 of the ensuing year, 1842, he laid the cornerstone, over which rises St. Mary's Cathedral (4) a noble Gothic structure, of symmetrical proportions, (5) whose tapering spire, well defined against a southern sky, rising 185 feet rears aloft the cross — the first harbinger of Natchez from afar and the last object the wayfarer beholds from land or river. For several years previous to Bishop Chanche's coming the Association for the Propagation of Faith had made annual donations to the missions of Natchez. Deposited in the hands of Archbishop Blanc, he remitted them to the new Bishop on his arrival. These funds were of material assistance in his early undertakings and ever since the continued contributions have assisted the successive Bishops in their works of zeal and charity.

One of the weightiest cares of a pioneer Bishop is the gathering and forming of a zealous and devoted clergy. To Bishop Chanche's kind persuasion and earnest pleading, the Diocese owes many of its best

(1) Father Brogard, of Natchez, soon to be recalled by his Bishop, and Father M. O'Reilly, the pioneer priest of Vicksburg, who was in a short space numbered with the dead.

(2) The monogram of Mary was the motto of his coat of arms.

(3) He said: "If I meet encouragement I will stay with you; if not, I seek a home elsewhere. I am not bound to Natchez, but to the State of Mississippi." Happily he met a cordial reception, and with few dissenting voices, the church property was transferred to him.

(4) Built after plans submitted by the celebrated architect Kelly, of New York.

(5) Its dimensions are 120x81 feet, exterior measurement.

missionaries. In central locations where there was hope of incipient congregations we soon find Father Francois, who died later in Louisiana, stricken at the altar by cholera, Rev. A. Desgaultiers, Rev. Louis Muller, Rev. S. H. Montgomery and Rev. G. S. Boheme (1) gathering around them a nucleus for Catholic settlements.

Christmas, 1849, the Bishop had the happiness of welcoming a band of heroic young men, valiant sons of loyal Brittany. Soon three of them, Rev. J. B. Babonneau, Rev. J. A. Fierabras and Rev. F. Courjault fell victims in 1853 to the insidious yellow fever. (2) Here in Natchez another, the Rev. Julian Guillou, from exposure during the late war, died just as the evening Angelus bells were chiming. And one other still abides among us, Very Rev. M. F. Grignon, the last living link in the chain connecting our times with the episcopate of Bishop Chanche. Spared beyond the allotted span of life, for thirty-seven years faithful amid plague and pestilence, peace and war, Father Grignon merits the love and gratitude of the congregation he has served so well.

Zealous for the spiritual welfare of his priests the Bishop opened a retreat March 15, 1843, under the guidance of Father Timon; no less solicitous for the spiritual progress of the laity the holy exercises of the Mission were frequently given in their behalf. Nor were the poor slaves neglected. In 1842 the saintly Father Francois began a mission exclusively for them. Received with coldness and with but two or three auditors, his perseverance increased the number to sixty; fifteen adults instructed and baptized may be mentioned as permanent fruits of his labors.

In 1847 the Jubilee was promulgated and the fervent Bishop notes with evident gratitude the marked improvement both in Natchez and throughout the Diocese. Eloquent and persuasive Bishop Chanche, both before and after his elevation, was much sought after as a preacher. His discourse on laying the corner stone of the Cathedral is replete with manly vigor and touching appeals. A sermon on Infallibility, delivered in Vicksburg, was much praised as a model of logical reason-

(1) Stationed at Paulding, he accompanied a Mississippi regiment composed largely of Catholics, to Virginia, and there died in the military camp near Ashland, 1862.

(2) Yellow fever has deprived the Diocese of many of its best priests. Besides the three enumerated, we record C. Pintoni, in Natchez, 1855; F. Pont, Pass Christian, 1867; A. Strake, Osyka, 1872; B. Ghisoldi, 1875. The scourge in 1878 swept away 18 sisters and 6 priests; Jno. McManus, Jno. Vitolo, Vicksburg; F. Cogan, Canton; A. O'berti, Holly Springs; Ch. van Queckelberge, Ocean Springs; T. B. Mouton, Yazoo City.

ing, while another, preached in his Cathedral soon after his return from Rome, on the condition of Europe, and especially of Rome, was greeted with violent denunciation by the sectarian press. Twice he preached in New Orleans during the services commemorative of the victory of January 8th: it was after the last of these visits that he proceeded to Havana, to search among Spanish archives for documents bearing upon Diocesan property. Treated with courtesy, his search was eminently successful, and to the documents then obtained our sketch has been more than once solely indebted.

Himself dependent on the shelter of a hired roof, he had suffered too much not to spare his successors like inconveniences. In July, 1846, he took possession of the new episcopal residence near the Cathedral, and of it he quaintly remarks: "It is a pretty convenient house. It has a good many faults, yet I hope my successors may be pleased with it." We may add that they were and are pleased with it. Laborious and long were Bishop Chanche's visitations. From the mountains to the seaboard; and from the Mississippi to the Tombigbee, no part of the vast vineyard was so barren but that it was rendered more fertile by his tireless care and attention. Here he began the erection of a church, there secured land for future needs, whilst through the length and breadth of his own diocese he everywhere performed the duties of a zealous pastor. In the Councils of the Church none were more honored than he. Twice he assisted at Provincial Councils, and in 1852 he acted as Promotor at the first Plenary Council. Among his brethren of the episcopate his sterling qualities and genial disposition were much admired: thrice had he been entreated to become Coadjutor to different Bishops. First he was proposed for his own loved Baltimore; then as Coadjutor to the venerable Dubois, of New York; his intimate friend, Bishop Fenwick, next sought the assistance of his boundless zeal, but to no avail. His prayers to be relieved from the burdens of the episcopacy were effectual. Not till forlorn, unsettled Mississippi claimed his loving solicitude could his consent be won.

When he left Natchez in 1852, in the fullness of health and vigor, little thought he that never again would it be given him to gaze upon his beloved Diocese and its cherished people—yet Providence had so decreed. At Frederick City, Md., he was stricken by the fatal cholera;

and though for two weeks he was stretched upon the bed of suffering, no complaint escaped him. Far away from his Diocese, yet surrounded by loving friends, on July 22d, 1853, in the 57th year of his age and the 12th of his episcopate, the soul of Bishop Chanche passed away. With his death the Hierarchy of the United States lost one of its brightest ornaments, and Natchez its first Bishop. His remains now rest beneath the noble pile in which he became a Christian, was ordained Priest, and received consecration as Bishop.

RT. REV. J. O. VAN DE VELDE.

Towards the close of the last century the impious doctrines of the French revolution agitated the greater part of Europe; in no country did their partisans propagate them more persistently, and in no country were they more effectually combatted than in faithful little Belgium. In these eventful times James Oliver Van de Velde was born, April 3, 1795, in the village of Termonde. Orphaned at an early age, the loss of his parents had been irreparable but for the tender solicitude of a pious aunt.

His early years spent under the same roof with exiles for the faith, his impressionable mind carefully formed by learned tutors, it is not strange that young Oliver's boyhood gave promise of his future career of usefulness. Amid such surroundings the germ of a vocation for the priesthood had been planted; he entered college to perfect his classical education and acquire the modern languages, for which he possessed decided abilities.

While pursuing his course in the seminary at Mechlin, Providence threw in his way Rev. Charles Nerincks, of Kentucky. The vivid description of this aged and zealous missionary so captivated the young student's fancy and moved his heart that he resolved to give himself to the American Missions. In company with a band of ardent youths destined for the Jesuit novitiate of Georgetown, he bade farewell to his native shores, May 16th, 1817. On the voyage young Van de Velde met with a serious mishap. During a fearful storm he fell heavily on the deck and ruptured a blood vessel. The loss of blood weakened him to such an extent that his life was threatened; though spared, this accident had a painful effect on his future health. On landing at Baltimore he was conveyed to St. Mary's Seminary, where, utterly un-

able to proceed to Kentucky, he was forced to remain. On his recovery, though urged to stay in Baltimore, he preferred, obedient to the attractions of grace and the advice of his providential guide, to seek entrance to the Jesuit novitiate. After faithfully undergoing the trial and probation usual in the Society of Jesus, he was ordained in his 33d year, and first labored in the missions of Maryland.

In 1831 Father Van de Velde was sent to St. Louis as Professor of Rhetoric and Mathematics in the recently founded college, since developed into the St. Louis University. Successively Vice-President and President of this seat of learning, he was chosen Procurator, then Vice-Provincial of his order, and in that capacity he first visited Rome. His many works of religion, his enlightened zeal and deep learning, drew upon him the notice of the episcopate; his name was forwarded to Rome as most worthy for the vacant Bishopric of Chicago, and in 1848 the Bulls appointing him to that See were placed in his hands. Shrinking from preferment, the humble Father wished to refuse the nomination, and not till the Archbishop of St. Louis and three theologians decided that the documents carried an express command from the Sovereign Pontiff, was he induced to be consecrated. This august ceremony took place in St. Xavier's Church, St. Louis, and the Archbishop of that See was consecrator. Immediately the new pastor proceeded to his Diocese, and as his feet touched its soil he began a career of apostolic labors, trials and sufferings, never to cease till death came to his relief. A life-long sufferer from rheumatism which the damp climate of Chicago increased, and thwarted by a few disaffected persons, the Bishop found his position intolerable, and twice begged of Rome permission to resign and retire to his beloved Society. Twice was he refused, and each time the Holy See counselled patience and fortitude. A third time he carried his earnest petition to the feet of the Father of Bishops, and in person besought relief from a burden beyond his strength. The Holy Father graciously acceded to his request, and promised to transfer him to a more genial and balmy clime.

While visiting his Diocese the following year, he received the brief of translation to Natchez, then widowed by the death of the lamented Chanche. Deferring his departure till the appointment of his successor, Bishop Van de Velde arrived in Natchez just one week before Christmas, Dec. 18, 1853. Bright and brilliant was that Sunday morn-

ing when the Church of Natchez cast off her garments of mourning to welcome her second Bishop.

But alas! In less than two short years death was to claim him as her own, and the See of Natchez again bewail the loss of a faithful shepherd.

Though the snows of sixty winters had whitened his hair, Bishop Van de Velde undertook a thorough and laborious visitation of his vast Diocese. Everywhere greeted with joy, religion seemed to gain a new impulse by his coming; new missions were founded and churches planned. In Natchez he purchased the Rose Hill property, on Union street, intending to build thereon a classical college to be conducted by the Jesuits of the English Province.

Occupied with these works, the startling news that fated yellow fever was ravaging his Diocese, sounded as a death knell to his sad spirit. Day by day he learned now that one, now that another, of his beloved priests, was stricken—and anguish filled his heart.

Rumors of its dread presence in Natchez had long floated about, and too soon, alas! he realized that it was epidemic among his loved flock. One priest, Father Le Corre, was attacked, Father Grignon was hurried to Vicksburg to minister to the sick and dying, and the Bishop was left alone. Sunday, Oct. 21, he writes in his journal: "To-day I went through almost all the grades of the orders. As Ostiarius opened the church doors and rang the bell, as Lector said the public prayers, as Acolythe prepared for the first mass and partly served it, as Priest heard confessions, sang High Mass, preached 'more Parochorum' and taught catechism, and as Bishop gave Solemn Benediction with mitre and crozier, from the the altar, as celebrant. *There was no one to be exorcised.*"

Two days after this was penned, Oct. 23, as the Bishop was descending the front steps, breviary in hand, he fell and fractured his right leg in two places. In the house all were sick, and he lay there till some passers-by, attracted by his moaning, kindly carried him to his room.

His sufferings were intense, yet up to Nov. 9 no one considered him in immediate danger. On this day the slight accompanying fever took a malignant form, and soon developed into the prevailing epidemic. Four days of excruciating agony, patiently borne, exhausted his

little remaining strength,— All saw that death was nigh, and, fortified by the Sacraments he had so often ministered to others, Bishop Van de Velde, his hand raised for a last blessing, died at 7 o'clock, Nov. 13, 1855.

Arrayed in his pontifical vestments, and with the insignia of his high office, his body was conveyed to the Cathedral and lay in state on a catafalque slightly raised, so that the Bishop appeared as if reposing. A sweet smile wreathed his face, and, venerable in life, he was beautiful in death. A Pontifical Mass for the repose of his soul was sung by Archbishop Blanc, assisted by Fathers Grignon, Leray and Pont; one of his confreres, Rev. F. Tchieder, S. J., recalled his virtues and good works, and then, amid the tears, prayers and veneration of a whole people, his remains were deposited in a vault prepared beneath the high altar of the Cathedral. Here they rested till 1874, when, at the earnest entreaties of the Jesuit Fathers of St. Louis, they were transferred to St. Stanislaus Novitiate, Florissant, Mo., where what is mortal of the second Bishop of Natchez lies in peace among his brethren of the Society he loved so well.

Of a studious, thoughtful character, his mind was rather analytical and deep than brilliant; in the library of the episcopal residence, one meets at every step evidences of his erudition, in the annotations and catalogues he has left.

Dignified in his bearing, somewhat impetuous in his speech, yet he was simple as a child, and bore a heart that ever beat in sympathy with suffering. His portrait, still preserved, shows an aged face deeply lined with suffering, but lighted up by kindness and good humor.

RT. REV. WM. H. ELDER.

The old Cathedral of Baltimore had witnessed many impressive ceremonies, but never any fraught with graver interest to the Church of Natchez than that enacted within its Sanctuary on the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, May 3d, more than 29 years ago. On that auspicious day William Henry Elder, then Director of the Theological-Seminary of Mt. St. Mary's College, received the unction of consecration from the scholarly Kenrick of that primatial See, and, bowing his young shoulders, took up the burden of the episcopate.

Born in Baltimore, March 22, 1819, of a traditional Catholic family, his studies were begun at Mt. St. Mary's College, Md., and completed at the Urban College, Rome, where he was ordained March 29, 1846.

Not a few yet treasure up as a bright picture on memory's wall that Pentecost Eve nearly three decades ago, when Bishop Elder, then the most youthful of the American prelates, came their third accredited Bishop. Solemnly installed the following day, from that Pentecost dates a career that has left its impress on the people of Natchez. For three and twenty years he went in and out amongst them, spent and being spent for their welfare; the sin-laden he relieved, the sick and suffering he comforted, and the ignorant he instructed. Who has not beheld his zeal and piety? Who has not been benefitted by his devotedness and charity?

Not inaptly has man's life been likened to a written book. Before the gaze alike of friend and foe, Bishop Elder's history has been spread out as an open volume, and blur or blot they may not point out. Beautiful was its opening, holy its pages, momentous many of its chapters, its close will be glorious. Mortal hand may never pen his toils and his labors, his kind words and gentle admonitions. But there is a land beyond where such deeds are royal, and deep down in the hearts of a grateful people their memory will ever live.

Cast in times when stirring events crowded fast one upon the other, Bishop Elder's episcopate must needs raise up an historian to do it justice. Though unwilling to wound the Bishop's modesty, we cannot forbear turning over some few leaves of his checkered life.

Forgetting the slow march of time, let memory wander back some twenty years, to the deadly strife that raged between brethren in our common country, when contending armies met within the borders of our State, and our soil was glutted with blood. The year 1862 closed gloomily on the Confederacy, and Gardiner's army, about 7,000 strong, lay at Port Hudson, La. Depressed by inaction and decimated by sickness, the lot of these brave men was pitiable. To Bishop Elder came the sad tidings, and he saw his duty.

In January, 1863, he traveled by buggy to Woodville, thence by train to Bayou Sara, and then made his way to the camp at Port Hudson. A God-send to the men, he was treated with courtesy by the

officers, and his heart was happy, for he could labor for souls. The sick he cheered; in a soldier's tent—a box for a seat—many a tale of sin and sorrow was poured into his ear, and next morning celebrating Mass in open air, he fortified them with the Bread of the Strong. He preached and entreated, and was consoled to know that his visit was not fruitless. On his return his buggy was twice overturned by swollen creeks, and little less than miraculous was his escape. (1)

On May 1st, of the same year, was fought the bloody battle of Port Gibson, and many of the wounded were dying unshriven and unannointed in the field and hospital. Bishop Elder hurried off in a borrowed conveyance, to the scene of woe. Over the battle-field he went; a soothing word, a gentle touch for each sufferer, while over the prostrate Catholic he bent, and moved not till an oppressed soul was lightened. Through the adjacent hospitals and private residences where dying and wounded lay, he passed, happy to exercise his mimitry of peace and reconciliation. Vivid and graphic are his descriptions of the battle-field, and when his caustic pen tells how the sufferers were tended by hirelings, his words burn as fire.

Later on, when the base of war removed to the eastern part of the State, he visited, as we read in his most interesting diaries, the many hospitals along the Mobile & Ohio R. R., as well as at Brandon and Jackson. Everywhere his zeal and charity comforted the hearts of the stricken soldiers, and the sacraments of the Church filled the dying with hope of a better life.

Every letter brought heartrending news. Two of his priests dead or dying in army hospitals, others disabled from exposure, his people ruined, no one knows the anguish of his heart.

New Year's day, 1863, the proclamation emancipating the slaves had been issued, and the poor, deluded freedmen, duped by self-seeking men, flocked hither, hoping to realize the golden dreams instilled by wily politicians. No preparations made for them, they were huddled together in improvised quarters on the old compress ground in the Corral. Without sufficient food or care, disease made fearful havoc among them, and when the loathsome small-pox found entrance its ravages ceased not until there remained no sound one to be attacked.

(1) English's company, wishing to manifest their gratitude, presented Bishop Elder, \$150 for his poor orphans of Natchez.

Dying by the hundreds, many with no knowledge of God or eternity, Bishop Elder saw that souls were imperilled, and with his self-sacrificing clergy, notably Father Charles Van Queckelberge, he lavished upon them every spiritual and material care. Rough boards hastily thrown together was their shelter, the bare ground their floor, the opening made by leaving out an occasional upright plank, their window. With no covering but their tattered rags, no pillow but a wisp of hay, they were dying in tortures and agony. Bishop Elder daily visited them. On one occasion as he entered a rude hut a horrid sight met his eyes: a dead body rested against the door, several corpses were strewn about, and in the centre stretched one poor sufferer on the point of expiring. Stooping over him he sought to assist him—but too late. Only one occupant was conscious, and him the Bishop had the happiness to baptize.

Amid such scenes, sickened by the fetid atmosphere and noisome exhalations, Bishop Elder labored unceasingly, and when Death's work was o'er, he might count hundreds of infants baptized, and many an adult that had been converted and gone forth penitent and hopeful.

Meanwhile Natchez was occupied by the military, and a proclamation commanding public prayers for the President of the United States was issued. This was a clear usurpation of spiritual jurisdiction by civil authority. The Bishop could not comply, and in a respectful remonstrance appealed to President Lincoln, praying exemption. Informed of this appeal, Col. Farrar agreed to hold the matter in abeyance. Unfortunately this gallant officer was superseded by Brig.-Gen. Brayman, who, pretending to see in the refusal nothing less than an act of rebellion, pledged himself to treat the Bishop and his people as rebels. In a carefully worded and luminous letter Bishop Elder explained his position, defined the principles of the Church and his bounden duty devolving upon him. For an answer, he was informed that unless the order were immediately complied with his Cathedral would be confiscated for military purposes and himself exiled.

Principle was at stake, and Bishop Elder was not the man to quail. The contest was not of his seeking, he had used all human means to avert it, and nothing remained but to abide the result. Yet sad and heart-rending was the contemplation—a beautiful Cathedral given over to unbridled soldiery, a shepherd in exile and the flock scattered.

Special order No. 11 was issued, and the Bishop was commanded to report within the military lines of Vidalia, La., and there remain under guard. Until recourse could be had to higher authority, the promulgation concerning the Cathedral was commuted. When the time for parting came, a vast concourse of people lined the water edge, and as the boat pushed off from Mississippi's shore the multitude fell upon their knees, beseeching his blessing, while from his own overcharged heart welled up these touching words: "God, forgive me for not doing more for such a people."

Detained in Vidalia for a short time, he suffered no bodily harm, though harassed by anxiety. Aware of the futility of his course, and moved by the intercession of Gen. Thomas and of Dr. and Mrs. Page, then in Natchez: Gen. Brayman countermanded the sentence, and special order No. 31, though couched in terms grossly insulting, permitted Bishop Elder to return. Amid the acclamations of the whole of Natchez, and the ringing of joy bells, he was received in his Cathedral; in its sanctuary a memorial prie-dieu is thus inscribed: "From the ladies of the congregation, in gratitude for Bishop Elder's release from military imprisonment. Aug. 12, 1863."

To one more trying scene we will revert, and then our pleasant duty is fulfilled. When the dread epidemic hung over the State and made of Vicksburg one vast hospital, Bishop Elder's was the post of danger. Time and eternity seemed to have touched, and among the tainted and dying he moved, consoling and absolving, finding refuge for the orphans, and performing the most menial service when there was none else to do it. Exhausted by toil and care, the Bishop succumbed to disease, and long lingered at Death's door—the throne of Mercy was besieged by the tearful prayers of a whole country, and he was spared yet longer. Scarcely was he returned to his loved and loving flock, when rumors were rife that he was to be transferred to a wider and more honored field of duty. Rejoicing that this was unfounded, all were startled by the astounding tidings, Jan. 30, 1880, that he was appointed to the Archiepiscopal See of Cincinnati. Bishop Elder, the man of sacrifice and obedience, might not refuse, and, bending his aged shoulders, took up the onerous burden. All know the rest—how he has drunk deep of the chalice, and how some impious men, calling

themselves his children, have sought to force him to drink even to the last bitter dregs.

From one place angels continually ascend, bearing prayers that his declining years may be soothed, that in number they may be many, and that upon his venerated head may descend the choicest blessings of Heaven.

RT. REV. F. JANSSENS.

The Rt. Rev. Francis Janssens, the fourth Bishop of Natchez and the present incumbent of that See, was born at Tilburg, Holland, Oct. 17th, 1843. In the seminary of his native Diocese of Bois-le-Duc, he made his preparatory and theological studies, and was there ordained Sub-Deacon in June, 1866. Desirous of devoting himself to the American Missions, in the fall of the same year he entered the American College connected with the famed University of Louvain, Belgium, and December 23d, 1867, he received the Holy Order of the Priesthood in Ghent.

Choosing the Diocese of Richmond for his field of labor, he arrived there in August, 1868, and served at the Cathedral under three successive Bishops—McGill, Gibbons and Keane. By Bishop, now Cardinal, Gibbons, he was created Vicar General, and after the promotion of this Prelate to the Archbishopric of Baltimore, he acted as Administrator of the Diocese until the appointment of Bishop Keane.

On Sunday, May 1, 1881, Bishop Janssens was consecrated in Richmond, by the Archbishop of Baltimore, and took possession of his See of Natchez the following Saturday, May 7th.

He beautified the Cathedral, and for him was reserved the pleasure and privilege of consecrating it. During his episcopate he has bestowed much attention upon his cherished work—Education.

During his first visitation to the coast, in the summer of 1881, Bishop Janssens visited a small remnant of the Choctaw Indians that dwelt in the Devil's Swamp, near the little Church on Bayou Lacroix. All had been baptized, and the Bishop confirmed 27 of them. In the fall of the same year, while visiting the more northern missions of his extensive Diocese, he found centered in and around Neshoba county from two to three thousand Indians of the same tribe, and, remembering the docility of their brethren on the coast, he was filled with the hope that these, too, might be led into the fold of Christ.

The Rev. B. J. Bekkers, a devoted priest willing to devote himself to the poor Indians, was secured, and in the fall of 1884 he bought an extensive farm, parceled it off among the Indian families, built a Church, opened a school, and soon the zealous missionary could see the fruit of his labors. In 1885 three Sisters of Mercy took charge of the school; in addition to this duty they visit the poor cabins, teach the women habits of industry and cleanliness with signal success. Since the opening of the mission more than 100 Indians have been baptized, and "the Mission of our Lady of the Rosary," blessed by God, has succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations! The Choctaws boast that never were their hands stained by the blood of the white man, and may God, rewarding them for their gentleness, shower upon them the blessings of our Mother the Church.

Favored by peace and the absence of that dreaded scourge, yellow fever, the Diocese has in the years of his administration increased in the number of priests and of churches.

III.

BUILDING OF ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL.

In 1841, soon after the arrival of the Bt. Rev. J. J. Chanche, first Bishop of Natchez, steps were taken to erect a suitable Cathedral. Nine years previous, fire had consumed the former Church on Commerce street.

Early in 1842 the foundation stone of the new Cathedral was laid. From Bishop Chanche's diary we glean some interesting particulars: "On February 24th, Feast of St. Matthias, at four o'clock of the afternoon, I laid the corner-stone of the Cathedral. I was assisted by Rev. John G. Francois and Rev. Albinus P. P. Desgaultiers. The corner-stone was placed at the corner of Main and Union streets. In it I placed a bottle containing a parchment on which were written the following words in Latin: 'On the 24th day of February, of the year 1842, Gregory, the XVIth Pope, most learned and most pious, ruling the Church of God; John M. Tyler, President of the United States of North America, and Tilghman M. Tucker, Governor of the State of Mississippi; John Joseph, first Bishop of Natchez, John S. Francois and Albino Desgaultiers, priests, assisting, and amidst a large concourse of

people, laid the corner-stone of the Natchez Cathedral Church, dedicated to God under the titel of the Transfixed Heart of the Ever Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary.' Also the Courier and the Free Trader, the two papers printed in Natchez, and some coin. The crowd was very considerable. I preached for twenty minutes."

Work was so rapidly pushed forward that before the close of the following year we find the walls completed and the building partially roofed and floored. Christmas Day, 1843, the structure was blessed; Bishop Chanche officiated pontifically, and preached. He was attended by Rev. Fathers Francois and Blenkinsop. From six to seven hundred attended Divine service.

The next event of note in the annals of St. Mary's is the blessing of the bell. That, even the old bell ringing out merry peals, for feast and festival, and sadly tolling ever and anon for the woes of stricken hearts, has a history, probably few are aware. In the summer of 1848 the zealous Bishop visited Europe to seek aid for his Cathedral. We use his own words to continue the narrative: "May 26th, 1849, Trinity Sunday, I blessed the beautiful bell presented to me by Prince Alex. Torlonia, of Rome. This bell had reached the city the Monday before, on the steamer Natchez. It came to me free of all expense, such had been the directions of the Prince to the different merchants through whose hands it was to pass. I blessed it according to the ceremonial laid down in the Roman 'Pontifical, and called it Maria Alexandrina in compliment to the donor and his lady. The bell is 'the work of Giovanni Lucenti it is beautifully decorated, and weighs upwards of 3,000 pounds. It is related that the night it was cast, about twelve o'clock the Prince left the company which he entertained, went with his wife and a few friends to the foundry, the lady cast a gold ring in the glowing, melting mass, and all knelt down, reciting the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and other prayers during the fusion. The bell was suspended Monday, 27th. On the occasion I was assisted by Revs. J. M. Moricet, M. F. Grignon, Jno. A. Fierabras and Father Matthew, the celebrated Apostle of Temperance. After the blessing of the bell, Father Matthew gave a lecture on Temperance, and administered the pledge to many." Three years later, Natchez mourned its first Bishop. If we knew naught else of him, St. Mary's graceful spire ever rears itself aloft a fitting monument of his zeal and taste. The good Bishop

in building the Cathedral, was often harassed by financial difficulties and twice the Cathedral was threatened to be sold for debt, which calamity was averted by the generous exertions of Father Raho, a Lazarist, who volunteered to remain here during the Bishop's absence in Europe. The property on Commerce street, the site of the old Spanish church, after Bishop Chanche's death, was sold by the sheriff for debt, and was bought in by St. John Elliott and wife. They, however, donated it to the Church, and subsequently the property was sold by Bishop Elder. "Bishop Chanche," writes Bishop Elder, "labored hard and suffered much. It is said by many that his life was shortened by his anxieties—caused in a great measure by disappointment in his expectations of material aid."

The Rt. Rev. J. O. Van de Velde occupied the See of Natchez less than two years. One of his first cares was the completion of the Cathedral, and shortly after his arrival an artist priest, Father Cambiazo, came from New Orleans to assist in making plans for finishing the Cathedral. In May, 1854, Bishop Van de Velde began slating the roof which before was of shingles. He cleared away the earth from the basement, put in doors and windows, and laid the floor in cement. He also provided the lumber required for finishing the interior of the Cathedral.

During Bishop Elder's administration the present floor was laid, interior plastering was begun and completed, the wood-work throughout was finished, pews were erected and windows put in. The following extracts from his journal, relating to the work on Cathedral will not be uninteresting: "In August, 1858, was begun the work for finishing the interior of the Cathedral of Natchez. Mr. Warner, who, the previous year, finished the Church of Vicksburg, was engaged as superintendent, and all was done according to his plans and under his directions. All was done by our own mechanics of Natchez. Much of the ornamental wood-work was entirely new to them, but Mr. Warner instructed them how to make it. The plastering was done under contract, by Mr. Carkeet, his son executing it." It is a notable fact that during all the work but one accident is recorded. Mr. Warner fell from a scaffolding 25 feet high. Though no limbs were broken, he lay as dead for awhile. For four weeks he was nursed at the episcopal residence, until his restoration.

Again we quote from Bp. Elder's journal: "The funds were partly collected in Natchez, partly in New Orleans, Baltimore, Emmitsburgh and from a few persons in St. Louis. The collections made did not equal the expense. About \$4,000 had to be paid by the Bishop out of the Allocation of the Propagation. He consulted the Archbishop of New Orleans about this use of the money. Both the Bishop and Archbishop hoped that after the finishing of the Cathedral the increase of revenue would enable some money to be returned to the Diocese every year. While the Church was occupied by workmen, from Sept. 1858, to Aug. 1859, Mass was celebrated in the basement, using only the end nearest the door, leaving the other end for the school."

For the description of the ceremonies attendant on the re-opening, we are indebted to the Weekly Free Trader, Aug. 20th:

"THE OPENING OF ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL.

"On Sunday last, Aug. 14th, the Cathedral was thronged at a much earlier hour than usual, to witness the ceremonies incident to its completion and opening again to Divine service. The Church is spacious, and its pews and benches, all of which were occupied, will probably accommodate 1,000 persons. The space on either side of the choir in the gallery was entirely filled with children, prominent among whom were the Catholic orphans of St. Mary's Asylum. Very many persons stood up in the recesses on either side, and in the aisles near the grand door-way.

At about quarter to ten o'clock a procession of the orphans and others, Catholic children of our city and county, in which appeared several banners of rich material, appropriate device and ornate finish, borne by the children followed by the clergy, entered the Church, and, passing up the main aisle, made way for the venerable Archbishop Blanc, the beloved Bishop of Natchez, and the priests and acolytes, to pass into the sanctuary, the children singing an appropriate hymn. Besides the Archbishop and Bishop, there were present Very Rev. Father Grignon, Vicar General, Rev. Mr. McGrane of the Redemptorist Fathers, Rev. F. X. Leray, of Vicksburg, and Revs. H. Leduc and F. Orlandi.

Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by the Archbishop who forty

years ago officiated as priest in our city—the choir, with Mr. Howard as organist, singing all the music and responses.

The sermon was preached by father McGrane, from the text taken from the 12th and 13th verses, 21st chapter of St. Matthew.

Towards the conclusion of his sermon the learned and eloquent Father spoke of the building of the Cathedral, being begun by Bishop Chanche, first Bishop of Natchez, and how his death had closed his labors; of the efforts of his successor, Bishop Van de Velde, to complete it, but that God had taken him away to another world; and finally of the success that had attended the labors of the 3d (present) Bishop. He spoke of the gratitude due to those who had assisted the Bishop with their means, in many instances with a liberality possibly greater than their circumstances in life would warrant; of the aid received from Baltimore, New Orleans, and elsewhere abroad, and lastly, but most feelingly, of the fraternal Christian spirit of the non-Catholics (he would not call them Protestants) who had so generously aided in the erection of this beautiful Temple of God.

At the close of the morning ceremonies, Bishop Elder, with a heart almost too full for utterance, expressed his pride and gratitude that with the blessing of God, the work of building the temple in which they were then worshipping, begun by his predecessor the first Bishop, was now so nearly completed."

This peaceful ceremony was scarcely over ere rumors of war moved men's souls, and within a few years the tocsin of battle sounds. Grim war, with all its attendant horrors, stalked over the land, and with no light footstep did it press upon the soil of Mississippi. In its wake came financial depression and an impoverished people, while almost periodical epidemics swept over the State for the next two decades. To care for the orphans thus deprived of natural support, to assist the poor and needy during all these terrible times was Bishop Elder's daily duty, yet amidst this he strained every nerve to liquidate the heavy debt incurred in finishing the Cathedral. How well he succeeded is best told by stating that to his successor he left a Diocese and Cathedral almost unencumbered by debt.

In 1881 Bishop Janssens took possession of his See, and as his work is of cotemporary history it needs but be mentioned. The erection of a commodious sacristy first claimed his care, rapidly to be fol-

loved by the new organ. The harmonious frescoing of the Sanctuary was finished, and the devotional altar-piece of the Crucifixion was unveiled on Christmas day, 1882. In August, 1884, all artistic Natchez was in admiration of the memorial windows then placed in the Sanctuary. The first on the Epistle side represents the Birth of our Lord, with Mary and Joseph bending over the Babe in rapt devotion, and is in memory of Margaret Quegles and her son Joseph. The one next the altar on the Epistle side shows St. Anna, mother of our Blessed Lady, while at her feet kneels her Immaculate Daughter Mary, attentive to her pious words; the window is in memory of Anna J. Janssens, mother of the Bishop. On the Gospel side nearest the altar is pictured the Queen of Heaven and her Child Jesus, offering a chaplet of roses to St. Dominic, rests upon her knee. This was presented by the Sodality of the Living Rosary. The other on the Gospel side, representing the Mother of Sorrows, holding in her embrace her dead Son and Lord, is in memory of Patrick McGraw.

In October, 1885, four windows, commemorative of the four Bishops of the See, were put in position in the body of the Church. In memory of Bishop Chanche is one representing his beloved patron, St. John the Evangelist, and on it is emblazoned the Bishop's coat of arms, the monogram of Mary and a sword crossed by an olive branch. The patron Saint of Bishop Van de Velde, St. James the Less, surrounded by the monogram of Jesus crucified, and the device of the Bishop, "*ad majorem Dei gloriam*," "To the greater glory of God," fills another panel. On the opposite side, St. William, Abbot, with the Transfixed Heart of Mary, and the Bishop's motto, "*vincit fides mundum*," "Faith conquereth the world," recalls Bishop Elder. The fourth window represents the seraphic St. Francis of Assissium, while the coat of arms of the present Bishop, a pierced hand, an eagle and three crossed arrows, with his device, "*Deus fortitudo mea*," "God is my strength," is commemorative of Bishop Janssens.

In September, 1886, four other memorial windows, representing St. Joseph and the Child Jesus, in memory of the parents of Jos. B. O'Brien; St. Mathilde, Queen of Scotland, in memory of Mathilde Arrighi; St. Armand, in memory of Armand Perrault, Sr., and St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, in memory of the departed parents of the late Peter Walsh, were placed in position. These windows, from

Innsbruck, in Tyrol, are of artistic design, with soft and harmonizing coloring; the style corresponds beautifully with the Gothic architecture of the Church. Bishop Janssens also adorned the columns and niches with nine new statues, and had the handsome iron railing placed around the Church premises.

The massive, elaborate Episcopal Chair is a grateful token and bears the inscription "From Major James Alexander Farrish, U. S. A., of N. Y., baptized in this Cathedral, March 31, 1864." The Baptismal Font was presented by A. J. Signaigo, in 1856, and the Holy Water Font, in 1859 by James Grillo. Among the sacred vessels of the Cathedral are some valuable heirlooms. Five beautiful chalices were presented, one "in 1845 by Gregory XVI to Bishop Chanche, of the Cathedral Church of Natchez, by him recently erected;" another by Pius IX; a third to Bishop Chanche by Henry T. Weld, of an old, noble English family, and brother to Cardinal Weld; a fourth to Bishop Van de Velde by the clergy of the Diocese of Chicago, and a fifth to the same by Archbishop P. R. Kenrick. In 1857 a magnificent Monstrance was presented by the Very Rev. A. Boone, of Bruges, Belgium, to the Cathedral of Natchez.

The late Patrick H. McGraw left the sum of \$1,000 to the city wherewith to place a clock in the Cathedral spire. The city accepted the bequest, and adding about \$400, the clock, one face of which is illuminated, was put in position June, 1881. Ever since it tells the wayfarer the hour of day and night, and gently reminds of its thoughtful donor.

Ours is a material age, and to its facts and figures are never uninteresting or inopportune. For its votaries we adduce the following financial statistics:

Bishop Chanche expended on Cathedral.....	\$33,711 81
At his death left a deposit of.....	\$10,723 40
Bishop Van de Velde collected.....	2,212 51
Sum expended by Bishop Van de Velde.....	12,935 91
Paid out by Bishop Elder to April, 1863.....	21,422 94
Spent during Bishop Janssens' administration.....	10,170 94

Total expenditures.....\$78,241 60

These figures show actual building cost, and do not include necessary repairs and alterations.

Dear and ever venerable to our people is old St. Mary's. Within its walls many of the scenes of life's shifting drama have had a place; of joy, it has seen much but of sorrow probably more.

At its sacred font, a generation have first breathed as Christians; up its aisle have passed many a lovely maiden and noble man to pledge before its Tabernacle mutual love and respect so long as mortal life doth last; before its altars our loved dead have received their last earthly blessing. 'Dust to dust' was spoken to their bodies till Resurrection's joys should come—and with the soul's flight to its God and Judge, many a prayer was sped for mercy and for rest. May these leaves endear the old Cathedral yet more and more to our young generation. Those whom age has mellowed need but spread out the tablets of memory. Then the scenes in which they were actors, and St. Mary's the place will freshen and grow bright and where the lines tell of sorrow deep, drear, and heavy, St. Mary's cross-surmounted spire ever points to what will soon be their happy eternal home "where partings are no more and sorrow is unknown."

IV

CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS,

ST. MARY'S ASYLUM.

The Catholic Church is a tender mother. There is no woe she does not soothe, or misfortune she does not succor. Her institutions meet every misery and phase of human suffering, and wherever a Bishop fixes his See there we find refuge for the poor, the orphan and the unfortunate. Natchez is no exception. Bishop Chanche soon saw that in a new and thinly settled country some provision must be made for the children of a destitute and floating population. Seeking for fit instruments, who more meet for this work of charity, than the heroic daughters of Vincent de Paul, who had forsaken life's joys that they might be called "Sisters of Charity."

In 1846, Natchez first saw the white cornette soon to become so familiar wherever want or misery called for a soothing hand. Three Sisters under Sister Martha, took up their abode in Mechanic's Hall on Main street, and began to gather in the stray waifs. Later on they resided on Rankin street, from whence they removed to a third house, and on Jan. 30, 1847, they took possession of their present residence. In April, 1848, Bishop Chanche made arrangements for the purchase of the property from Mr. Ferriday, the owner. Three notes, amounting to \$3,227, payable in one, two and three years, were given. Col-Rice C. Ballard kindly endorsed them, and at their maturity generously paid the indebtedness. Bishop Chanche in his journal says: "Heaven will bless him for his generosity." This pious wish was fulfilled, for Col. Ballard became a Catholic and died some years later in Kentucky fortified by the sacrament of the Church.

Mr. Francis Surget left the Asylum a legacy of \$6,000, by which means the Trustees were enabled to erect additional buildings. Sister Mary Thomas, yet lovingly remembered for her ardent charity and innumerable works of zeal, erected the building in the rear and otherwise greatly improved the premises. From its inception to the present time it has cared for 543 orphans, and now flourishes under the care of Sister Tharsilla. Among its greatest benefactors are Dr. Francis Reilly, of Canton, Dr. Mercer, of New Orleans, and Mr. John Curran, of Jackson.

D'EVEREUX HALL ORPHAN ASYLUM.

D'Evereux Hall Asylum owes its existence to the liberality of Mr. William St. John Elliott and his wife. This charitable gentleman had left a legacy to found an Asylum for boys: the reversion of his country-seat, D'Evereux Hall, after his wife's death. To carry out his noble idea, Mrs. Anna F. Elliott, his widow; waiving all the conditions, agreed to purchase the reversion for its full cash value, \$27,500. By this generous arrangement, the place, now occupied by the Asylum, was purchased from Mr. Turner for \$8,000, and its blessing and inauguration was celebrated by a public festival on the grounds, at which Mr. W. W. Wood and Col. Giles M. Hillyer made addresses. For a short period the Institution was directed by Mr. Stack, but in 1860 Rev. Frederick Muller, a priest from Saxony, took charge and continued its direction till the fall of 1865. During this time the Asylum subsisted in great part on the interest of money given by Mrs. Elliott. During the Federal occupation of Natchez, in 1863, the fences were torn down and carried off, and a large number of peach trees cut down for fire-wood. For three years no crop could be raised for want of fences. In the spring of 1865, Bro. Athanasius, Provincial of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, visited Natchez, and pleased with the situation, concluded arrangements for taking charge of the Asylum. In the fall of the same year, three Brothers, Bro. Florimond Director arrived, and according to agreement, commenced a school at the Cathedral as well as at the Orphanage. The revenue of the Asylum depended in great measure on bills payable by third parties. The war brought on unexpected financial straits, and the Trustees sold these acceptances at depreciated figures.

Meanwhile, Brothers and Orphans occupied the small frame house yet on the ground, for it was not till the summer of 1866, that the brick

house was begun, and, though incomplete, was occupied the same fall. The produce of the farm enabled the Brothers to repair the fences, and under direction of the Bros. Felician and Symphorian, the institution grew and flourished, and to-day the fields teem with produce, the fruit of the patient toil of the Brothers and hardy boys. In 1876, Bro. Gontran was placed in charge and has since materially improved the surroundings.

The epidemic of 1878 crowded the building to repletion, and an addition was of absolute necessity. With the consent of the contributors the remains of the yellow fever contributions were applied to assist in building the new wing. Since the beginning, 348 boys have been cared for in D'Evereux Hall Asylum. Excepting the daily labors of the Brothers and Sisters, the orphans have no regular means of subsistence, and they depend entirely on the voluntary contributions of a charitable public. This short sketch would be incomplete without paying a tribute of deserved praise to those devoted ladies of Natchez who in every city, town and hamlet of Mississippi, collect the offerings for the Lord's little ones.

CATHEDRAL SCHOOL.

The first Catholic school for boys was begun by Bishop Chanche in Mechanics' Hall, but it was soon discontinued. Again a school was commenced where the Miller House now stands, and this was at a later date transferred to the basement of the Cathedral.

In the early summer of 1866, a meeting of the congregation was held at which it was agreed to erect a handsome and convenient school house and which was to be confided to the direction of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart then laboring in their midst. Yet recorded on the registers are the liberal subscriptions amounting to \$7,500 made at this meeting, and persons not present thereat subscribed much more. In June, 1866, the foundation was laid. The Brothers opened school in the basement of the Cathedral and there continued till 1867 when the new building, though not finished, was occupied. The rapid and successful completion of this substantial edifice is due to the energetic efforts of Very Rev. Father Grignon, faithfully aided by a generous people. For a score of years this school has been in successful operation with an average attendance of 100 pupils. Many of the young

men of our city adorning high social position and filling the busy walks of commerce, hail the Cathedral School as their nursing mother, and yet retain a fond remembrance of the scene of their youthful ambition and first success.

ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL.

Immediately after the advent of the Sisters of Charity in 1846, they began a day school in connection with the Asylum. They began with some forty pupils, and during the twenty years that this arrangement continued the average attendance was from fifty to sixty. In April, 1867, the Sisters purchased the large house and extensive grounds on State between Commerce and Pearl streets, formerly occupied by Rev. Dr. Chase, a Presbyterian minister, and at once converted it into St. Joseph's School under the direction of Sister Clotilda. During the present year the Sisters erected a commodious three-story brick building well fitted for school purposes, and within its walls they train 130 pupils in all that goes to adorn the virtuous and accomplished Catholic lady.

Justly famed for their devotedness and charity to the sick and dying, on the battle-field and in hospitals, the Sisters of Charity are not less successful as efficient teachers and guides to the formation of character. Their work is best seen in the modesty, piety and learning of the ladies of Natchez who are proud to claim St. Joseph's as their Alma Mater.

A little before the war the Catholic Graveyard adjoining the far side of the city cemetery was purchased, and on the afternoon of All Saints of the same year, it was solemnly blessed by Father Grignon, V. G., after which Bishop Elder preached. This was the beginning of the annual All Souls procession, which is still continued.

The small brick house adjoining the Bishop's residence was built in 1855-6 chiefly at the expense of Mrs. Charlotte Moore, on condition that she should occupy it during life and after death it was to revert to the Bishop.

V

DIOCESAN SYNOD. CONSECRATION OF THE CATHEDRAL.

The fifth Synod of the Diocese of Natchez was convened Wednesday, Sept. 15th, 1886, and its public and private sessions continued during Thursday and Friday. The decrees based principally upon the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore were most harmoniously adopted.

Thursday morning, Solemn Pontifical Mass was celebrated by the Rt. Rev. Ordinary, assisted and surrounded by his clergy, after which Rev. W. R. Miles, S. J., of New Orleans, preached an eloquent sermon on "The Church and her Councils," and this was followed by the opening ceremonies of the Synod. At 7 o'clock p. m., the same Father delivered an able discourse on "The Authority and Dignity of the Priesthood."

The Solemn Pontifical Requiem Mass for the deceased Bishops and Priests of the Diocese was celebrated Friday morning, and at its close Father Miles delivered a Memorial Sermon on "The Life and Works of the Deceased Prelates and Priests." At the evening service the Rev. Father spoke on "The Duty of the Laity towards the Church."

Large and attentive congregations attended all the public services, and while edified by the beautiful and sublime ceremonies, were interested and instructed by the series of discourses.

There were present at the Synod the following clergymen :

Very Rev. Mathurin F. Grignon, V. G., Natchez,

" " Henry Leduc, Dean, Bay St. Louis.

" " Henry Picherit, Dean, Vicksburg.

Rev. Joseph L. Wise, Yazoo City.

" Thos. J. Finn, McComb City.

" Louis Vally, Meridan.

Rev. Florimond Blanc, Pass Christian.

“ Christopher Bohmert, Ocean Springs.

“ Theophile Meerschaert, Natchez.

“ Herman Oberfeld, Natchez.

“ Julius Van Houver, Louisville.

“ Louis Dutto, Jackson.

“ Patrick Hayden, Columbus.

“ Victor Bally, Scranton.

“ Thos. A. Lonergan, Sulphur Springs.

“ Henry Hahn, Aberdeen.

“ John H. Wood, Water Valley.

“ Anthony Peters, Canton.

“ J. A. Foppe, Holly Springs.

“ Henry Moormans, Brookhaven.

“ Francis G. Lennon, Rodney.

“ C. A. Oliver, Vicksburg.

“ Paul Korstenbroek, Greenville.

The following were duly excused :

Rev. Georget, who retires from the active ministry.

“ Philip Huber, Vicksburg.

“ Peter Chevalier, Biloxi.

“ Alois Van Waesberghe, Jordan River.

“ Alphonse Baur, Paulding.

“ B. J. Bekkers, Indian Mission, Neshoba county.

“ Auguste Althoff, Chatawa.

“ Alphonse Ketels, Jordan River.

Beautiful was the sight and edifying it was for the faithful to behold grouped in the Sanctuary, the Rev. Clergymen of different nationalities and customs, yet of one heart and one purpose, pious, zealous and self-sacrificing in the difficult labor of tilling the vineyard of Christ in the State of Mississippi. “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

The Prelates and Priests were kindly and hospitably entertained during their stay in Natchez by the members of the congregation, who, receiving them as the ambassadors of Christ, “ministered unto them of their substance.” May God reward their strong faith and affectionate ministrations.

At an early hour, Sunday, Sept. 19th, 1886, the Feast of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Rt. Rev. Bishop of the Diocese Francis Janssens, assisted by many of the diocesan clergy began the consecration of the Cathedral and its main altar.

Within the altar-stone was placed a tin box enclosing the relics of the martyrs, Sts. Victor, Innocentus and Celestinus and a parchment thus inscribed in Latin: "In the year, 1886, the 19th of September, I, Francis Janssens, Bishop of Natchez, have consecrated the Church and this altar, in honor of the Transfixed Heart of the ever blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, and have enclosed the Relics of Martyrs and have granted in the usual form of the Church, an indulgence of one year this day and on each anniversary of the consecration an indulgence of forty days to all the faithful of Christ visiting the Church."

At half past ten o'clock, a procession was formed at the Episcopal residence, headed by Cross-bearer and Acolytes, and followed by all the children of the schools and asylums with their banners and oriflammes, all the priests who had assisted at the Synod, the Rt. Rev. Bishops O'Sullivan, of Mobile, Becker, of Savannah, the Ordinary of the Diocese, the Most Rev. Archbishop of the Province, Mgr. Leray, of New Orleans, and the venerable Archbishop Elder, of Cincinnati, formerly of Natchez, who was to officiate at the Pontifical Mass.

The procession started amid the ringing of the bells, and when it arrived at the entrance, the choir struck up the joyful hymn "Laudate Dominum quia benignus est," Praise ye the Lord, for he is good. The Church was crowded with Catholics and non-Catholics, many of whom came from a distance, and the desire to witness the grand ceremonies was so great that fully 1,250 persons admitted by tickets filled the sitting and standing room of the spacious building.

After the Gospel, the Rt. Rev. T. A. Becker, of Savannah, ascended the pulpit, and choosing his text from that part of the III Book of Kings, descriptive of the dedication of the Temple of Solomon, said that many distinguished prelates some from contiguous dioceses and some from afar had come to form with them a triple alliance, to show veneration and regard for this august ceremony, to venerate and respect the sublime ceremonial of the church that they had just witnessed, which the more it is studied the more admired, and lastly to congratulate them

on the perfection of the grand work done under their auspices and of those who rule over them in the Lord. After paying a graceful tribute to the deceased Bishops, he said, that of the living he was forbidden to speak; he congratulated the people on having such a line of priests, zealous and pious, the honor and glory of a Diocese, to guide and guard them to life everlasting. He congratulated them on their institution of charity and learning; and that to-day their Church had been dedicated nay consecrated exclusively to God, transformed from an earthly into a heavenly dwelling, a type of the new Jerusalem, a house of God from which daily sacrifice and prayers, the essential of religion, would ascend, a clean oblation not simply from the hearts of the people but from the hands of a chosen Priesthood. Then beginning with the prophecies and the sacrifices of the Old Law he demonstrated that the latter were but types and foreshadowings of the essential sacrifice of the New Law ever to be offered in the Church and pointed out that they were but prefiguring Jesus Christ and his Spouse the Church. Yonder is the type, here the reality; there the shadow, here the glory. The Catholic Church, he said, was One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. One in her essence and unity, Holy in her doctrines and truth, Apostolic because she can trace her descent and priesthood back to the unlearned men who received the divine commission 'Go, teach ye all nations.' Had any one lived four centuries or a thousand years ago he could have been nothing but a Catholic, for then there was no other religion. She is Catholic. She is not the Church of England, or France or Germany or of the United States, but the Church of the living God and as such is revered by the greatest intellects of the age. This Church is grand, for on nineteen centuries has she left her impress. Hers is the office to give light to them that sit in the darkness. The Spouse of Christ, she claims our love and respect, not only during life, but especially in death for he who has not the Church for a Mother, cannot have God, for his father. In conclusion he hoped that the memory of this glorious day would ever be green, and that each recurring anniversary may bring down blessings from on high, and that each may say, 'I believe in the One, Holy, Catholic Apostolic Church.' He preached eloquently and learnedly for nearly three-quarters of an hour, and his impassioned words thrilled the hearts of his hearers.

The choir had spared no pains to do justice to the solemn occasion

and rendered Hayden's Impèrial Mass with correctness and precision under the able direction of the organist, Miss Bessie O'Cavanagh, accompanied by five instruments of the Mexican Band. The Sopranis were Misses Minna O'Cavanagh, Norma Grillo, Mary O'Conley, Ollie Smith, Mrs. Vincent Perrault and Mrs. Eva Cross; the Altis were Misses Carrie Quarterman and Lucy Welch; the Tenors, Messrs. Jno. Dix and Chas. Perrault, and the Bassi, Messrs. David Dix, Louis S. Davis and Max Winchester.

In the afternoon, Most Rev. Archbishop Leray, of New Orleans, the last priest ordained in the Cathedral by Bishop Chanche, (1) sang Pontifical Vespers. Before solemn Benediction, Archbishop Elder, in some feeling words, addressed the large congregation. He said 'that he beheld a holy city decked like a bride going to meet her spouse.' Such was this Church to him. All things spoke of gratitude. He would not forbear casting a glance at the past to recall the memory and labors of his noble predecessors in the Diocese of Natchez. He spoke of the charity of many who had generously assisted in the works of zeal and benevolence. Heaven, he said, was a place of eternal gratitude, and to-day, too, was a day of joy and thanksgiving, but his mind reverted to those who had tilled the hard earth and watered the roots when yet beneath the soil. Of them he claimed the right to speak and to request the prayers of the people. Let there be no limit to joy and to gratitude, but let us not forget those that are gone; on such an occasion we remember the absent and the gaps made by death, but, said he, let us remember God loves our tears and that there is a place where all tears are wiped away. This consecration is an emblem of the Kingdom of Heaven. May all who are here present be gathered there at the end and may the dear departed not be wanting.

The altars, ornately and tastily decorated with flowers and rich drapery, showing out from myriads of lights, formed a lovely picture and reflect much credit on the artistic taste and skill of Miss Augusta Grillo and her deft assistants. The grand and suggestive ritual of the Consecration and the gorgeous ceremonies of the Pontifical High Mass and Vespers were carefully and admirably carried out under the direction of

(1) Bishop Chanche was very unwell in 1852 when he ordained the young priest, now the Archbishop of New Orleans. After the ceremony, worn out with fatigue, he threw his arms around him saying: "You are the child of my sorrows, you are my child indeed."

the Master of Ceremonies, Rev. T. Meerschaert, attached to the Cathedral since 1880, ably assisted by Rev. P. Hayden, of Columbus. Everything was beautifully and orderly arranged and under the auspices of the Guard of Honor and the courteous ushers nothing occurred to mar the solemnity of the day.

With the evening Angelus Bell passed away the last ceremonies of the sacred Consecration leaving a Church sanctified and holy and on the minds of the privileged beholders, a memory sweet enough to linger many a day.

Of the dear Church of Natchez and her history we now take a fond farewell. For two centuries we have followed her course; we have mourned with her in her manifold trials and sorrows great; we have shared her eager anticipations for the future, and when these longing hopes became happy realities then uniting our voices with her prayers, we have sent on high our fervent thanks to Him from whom all blessings flow.

The Church, as we have seen, is no stranger in Natchez. She was present at its birth; she blessed it in its cradle; she beheld with joy its manly growth and vigor and when dire disasters and desolation settled o'er it, hers were the first hands to assist and soothe, to comfort and to alleviate. And when the end does come, she will still be there to point out the way and lead us to Heaven.

